

# Asian Odyssey

A National K-12 Interdisciplinary Curriculum Model

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## ANIMALS IN JAPAN

### Grade Level

This lesson plan was developed for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. It can be adapted for kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### Purpose

To learn about the symbolism associated with animals in Japanese culture.

### Concepts

- Carp – A common fish found in Japanese ponds. Carp kites are hung on poles to honor the sons in the family on Children's Day, May 5.
- Chrysanthemum – A flower found in the United States and Japan that blooms in the fall and is used as a symbol of autumn in Japan.
- Crane – A large, long-necked bird that is common in Japan. Children make origami (folded paper) cranes. Cranes are believed to bring good luck.
- Haniwa –sixth-century clay sculptures often used as protection (such as around tombs). Haniwa horses were early symbols of strength.
- Heron – A long-legged bird that hunts for fish in streams and pools of water.
- Mythical – Traditional, serving to explain some phenomenon or custom.

### Key Ideas

- Many animals figure in Japanese mythology and arts, such as the crane and carp. These animals often have symbolic associations.
- In Japan, children have many of the same pets that children have in the United States such as dogs, cats, birds, turtles, and fish.
- The horse has been a beloved and respected animal in Japan for hundreds of years. Horses were given as valuable gifts in the past. Horses were well cared for and beautifully groomed.
- Different animals are native to different parts of Japan. In the north, where it is cold, there are snow monkeys (macaque) and brown bears. In the south where it is warmer, there are many deer, wild boars (pigs) and lizards.

### Materials

*Puppies, Sparrows and Chrysanthemums*, late 18<sup>th</sup> century, CMA 1970.71.4

*Horses and Grooms in the Stable*, early 1500s, CMA 1934.373.1

*Caparisoned Haniwa Horse*, 400s-500s, CMA 1957.27

*Birds, Trees, and Flowers*, late 1500s, CMA 1948.128.1-.2

*Lions*, Sekkei Yamaguchi, 1668, CMA 1972.10.1

*Tiger and Leopard*, Sekkei Yamaguchi, 1668, CMA 1972.10.2

*Heron on a Willow Branch*, late 1700s, CMA 1997.108

*Tiger Family*, early 1800s, CMA 1983.3.1-.2

*Geese, Reeds, and Water*, Yamamoto Baiitsu, 1800s, CMA 1997.109.1-.2

Johnson, Ryerson. *Kenji and the Magic Geese*. Illustrated by Jean and Mou-sien Tseng. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

Kroll, Virginia. *A Carp for Kimiko*. Illustrated by Katherine Roundtree. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 1993.

*The Loyal Cat*. Retold by Lensey Namioka. Illustrated by Aki Sogabe. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995.

Wells, Rosemary. *Yoko's Paper Cranes*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2001.

### **Procedure**

1. Warm up: Have students make a list of the students' favorite animals. Have children explain their choice of favorite animals.
2. Ask children to write down what animals they might see/ hear each fall migrating. Have them use as many of their senses as they can when they describe the migrating animals.
3. Read the story, *Yoko's Paper Cranes*. Compare the crane's winter migration in Japan to the birds we see migrate from northern United States each fall.
4. Show a slide presentation of the animals represented in the CMA images. Work with the class to develop a list of the various animals visible in Japanese art. Then have students create a similar list of animals they know live in our country.
5. Talk about the importance of horses throughout Japanese history. Notice the haniwa horse and the well-groomed horses in their stables. Look for other animals (including a monkey) in this screen.
6. Compare the animals on the class's list to the animals seen in the Japanese art pieces.
7. Have each child choose a favorite animal from the slides. Draw and write about the animal comparing the animal with their favorite animal they chose at the beginning of the lesson.

### **Enrichment**

- A. Make clay animals like the haniwa horse.
- B. Visit the local aviary at the zoo to observe a great variety of beautiful birds.
- C. Read *Kenji and the Magic Geese*. Observe the screen, *Geese, Reeds and Water* and compare the geese in the story to those on the screen. Could they be the same? Talk about the magic that occurred.
- D. *The Loyal Cat* is another magical mythical Japanese story about animals.
- E. Read *A Carp for Kimiko*. Discuss the Children's Day celebration in Japan. How did Kimiko feel about the carp kites being just for boys?
- F. Make origami animals.

### **Ohio State Standards**

*People in Societies Standard: Diffusion*

Describe life in other countries with emphasis on daily life.

*History Standard: Daily Life*

Compare past and present, near and far, with emphasis on daily life.

*Science Standard: Life Sciences*

Investigate observable features of plants and animals that help them live in different kinds of places.

**This lesson plan was developed by Barbara Landis, first grade teacher, Beachwood City Schools, Beachwood, Ohio.**